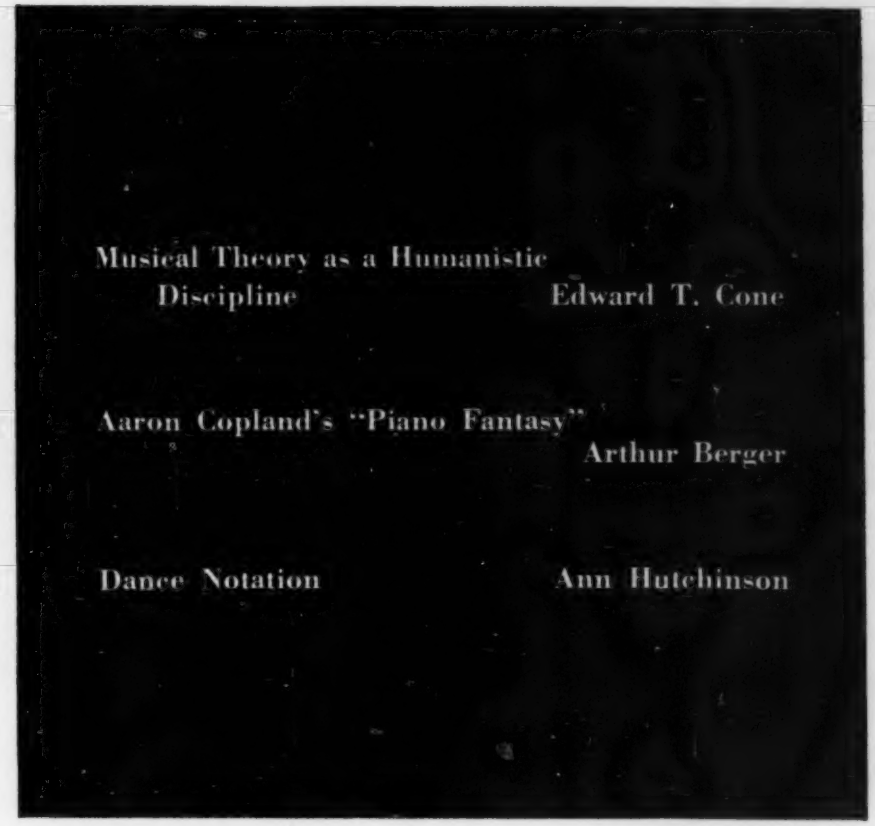
THE juilliard review



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Musical Theory As A Humanistic Discipline

by Edward T. Cone

By musical theory I mean nothing very profound and nothing at all new: I refer to the familiar disciplines of harmony, counterpoint, analysis, and orchestration, leading to strict and free composition in both traditional and contemporary idioms. In other words, my consideration of theory as a humanistic study includes all theory and implies no attempt to set up one particular system—such as Schenker's, or Hindemith's—as the only one worthy of so dignified a name. If at times I treat it as a subject of instruction and at times as a field for speculative thinking, I hope it will be easy to distinguish which is meant, and that the relation between the two will remain clear.

The word "humanistic," on the other hand, must be understood in a restricted sense: I use it here as referring to "the humanities," and not to "humanism." The broader implications of the term "humanities" I prefer not to deal with just yet; for the moment an extensive definition based on practical observation will suffice. All universities would, I believe, include the arts and letters under this category; most would add philosophy; and many would admit history, at least when it is not oriented exclusively toward the social sciences.

A comparison of this list with the medieval trivium and quadrivium reveals that music, alone among the four members of the quadrivium, is now classified among the humanities. Of the other three, astronomy has long been recognized as one of the natural sciences; and arithmetic and geometry are of course branches of mathematics—a discipline that, in one university at least, is given a unique place somewhere between philosophy and the physical sciences. It is clear that music formerly took its place among these subjects because it was investigated primarily in its theoretical mode; indeed, the practical performer hardly merited the name of musician. Like its allied disciplines it was a study of measurement, of proportion; and conversely the medieval scholars sought in mathematics and astronomy the harmonious relationships they found in music. If music is found today among the humanistic rather than the scientific disciplines, is it not properly only the study of its history and literature that belongs there? Were the schoolmen not right in placing theory, with its emphasis on number, among the mathematical sciences? And would they not today, observing to what extent theory now emphasizes technical routine, banish it from the liberal curriculum altogether?

It is true that the study of theory has its routine aspects, but drill is a prerequisite to the attainment of proficiency in any discipline. It is likewise true that the study of theory may have narrowly vocational ends: the improvement of instrumental performance, for example, or the ability to arrange popular tunes. At a higher level, it is obviously indispensable in the training of composers; and for many this is the real importance of the subject. From another point of view, however, none of these purposes would admit it into the present-day humanistic curriculum: it is there as a necessary phase in the training of students of musical history and literature, and as a tool for musical scholars. It furnishes a rigorous, technical, quasi-scientific background for further musical studies.

At this point musical theory finds analogues in many other fields commonly held to be humanistic. History, literature, the other arts —all require as background certain technical disciplines that because of the nature of their inquiries and the rigorousness of their methods should properly be referred to as sciences. Epigraphy, paleography, linguistics,—subjects like these suggest that there is no sharp division between the historical sciences on the one hand and the humanities proper on the other—that any distinction, to be

useful, must be made on a basis of general approach to subject-matter, rather than of subject-matter itself. Once such a definition has been accepted, it will then become possible to admit a humanistic approach to the natural sciences and mathematics—perhaps even to musical theory considered no longer as a tool for practical or scholarly studies, but for its own sake!

I suggest that the subject-matter of the humanities embraces all human activities and all records thereof—not merely those labeled as "literary" or "intellectual" or "historical"—and that the humanistic approach is concerned with the study of these activities and records as concrete expressions of human thought and embodiments of human values. Viewed in this light, a building, a geometrical theorem, and a scientific demonstration, could be as fruitful as a lyrical poem or a critical essay.

An example of the difference between the scientific and the humanistic approaches may be helpful here. When a physicist is confronted with the presentation of a new theory, together with the description of the experiments that tend to substantiate it, he naturally looks for accurate observations and measurements, logical deductions, and objective conclusions. He regards the theory as an attempt to describe the universe more accurately or to formulate its workings more precisely, and he judges accordingly. The humanist, on the other hand, facing the same mass of evidence and inference, asks rather, "What was this man trying to say and why was he trying to say it?" He is less concerned with so-called objective, scientific truth than with the truth of the concrete human situation. For him a fallacious theory is as useful as any other, provided only that it reveals the attitude that called it into being. The systems of Ptolemy, Copernicus, and Einstein are equally valuable as expressions of man's views of his own position in the universe.

The subject of mathematics might be an instructive one to investigate for a moment by way of further clarification, since it is often considered to be, of all the intellectual disciplines, the one least amenable to humanistic blandishments. Because mathematics points in one direction toward physics, engineering, and technology, and in the other, through logic, toward philosophy, it is all too seldom considered as a vehicle of expression or as a medium for the transmission of values. But a comparison of the geometrical notions and methods of Euclid, Descartes, Poncelet, and Lobatschewsky, to name

only a few obvious figures, reveals that their contributions to mathematical thought, far from being cold and precise abstractions, are as various and individual as the personal characteristics of the men themselves, and that the newly emerging values of every age demand new formulations, which in turn may influence the very values that called them forth. With reference to Descartes, for example, one might well ponder the fact that his coordinate geometry made possible for the first time a complete investigation of the ellipse, during the century that saw Kepler's description of the planetary orbits and the completion of the Piazza of St. Peter's.

The same point could be made with reference to the aids to scholarship grouped together as historical sciences. Linguistics, for example, can be a precise, sharp tool for research; but with a different approach, as Edmund Wilson's recent essay on Hebrew[1] has shown in a non-technical way, it can be made to reveal the essentially normative function of language-structure.

It is fallacious, then, to assume in advance that any subject is barren of humanistic fruit. But before proceeding further I wish to point out the opposite danger of over-enthusiasm for what I have called the technical tools, to the point of assuming that they are sources of artistic value. The relation of geometry to architecture, already cited, is a case in point: the symmetry of the Cartesian formula for the ellipse, beautiful in its own way as it may be, must never be called upon to explain the magnificence of Bernini's piazza. And as we all know, Bach and Reger were equally adept at canon. This, I believe, is also why some of us feel vaguely disquieted at analyses of Mozart's Requiem purporting to show, by distinctions of handwriting, inks, and watermarks, which sections are by the master and which by the pupil. Graphology should not be allowed to usurp the prerogative of critical evaluation.

What happens all too often is a confusion between two ways of looking at works of art, each valid so long as kept distinct from the other. For a work of art is both an esthetic and a historical document. It can never be regarded purely as either; but so long as one considers it esthetically, historical study must be used only as a means—and conversely, esthetic judgment becomes only a means when one's aim is primarily historical. Both ways of approach are humanistic, but whereas the one uses history to clarify the meaning

1 "On First Reading Genesis," in *Red, Black, Blond, Olive*, New York, Oxford University Press 1956.

of the individual work, the other uses the work to enlarge our view of history.

It is clear, then, that any humanistic discipline can be used as a tool, but that no such discipline is exclusively a tool; and now at least we must return to musical theory. In precisely what way should theory serve as an aid to the more immediately humanistic branches of musical literature and history, and to what extent can it be admitted to the curriculum of the humanities as a subject to be studied for its own sake? The latter question is the more difficult and the more crucial; but the former must not be dismissed too easily. It is obvious that a knowledge of the systematic principles governing musical composition during any historical period is necessary for a complete understanding of the music of that period—or at least, of what the musicians of the period thought of their music. Knowledge of this kind, however, can never lead to understanding unless the ear itself is directly involved. All too current nowadays is the unfortunate notion that a listener or student with a completely ignorant ear can nevertheless not only fully enjoy a composition, but also adequately comprehend it—even to the extent of writing about it for publication! I am not among those who consider it necessary to label every chord or derive every theme in order to grasp the essential flow of a piece of music; but I do not see how one so unaware of elementary harmonic language that he cannot tell tonic from dominant can fail to miss the purport of a tonal composition. He need not know their names, but his ear must know the difference; and the scattered applause that invariably accompanies the general pause following the huge half-cadence near the end of Tschaikowsky's Fifth Symphony indicates that there are many ears at our concerts that cannot make this distinction. One of the prime functions of theoretical instruction is to educate the ear; and no potential critic or scholar, whether professional or amateur, can afford to risk insufficient or inadequate training of this kind. Of our professionals, naturally, we expect more. They should, indeed, be able to listen for us or before us, and lead us toward hearing, if we can, what they have heard.

Theory, then, should guide the ear; and this is perhaps its greatest service to the musical historian or esthetician. But in return it must be guided by the ear, for the most beautiful system is musically meaningless if it is not aurally perceptible. Composers and critics alike remember this. When proponents of advanced

twelve-tone methods point by way of historical justification to the isorhythmic complications of the late fourteenth century, they often fail to ask how successful these earlier compositions really were, and whether both the earlier system and the later, if carried too far, are not in danger of outstripping human hearing. Similarly Heinrich Schenker, a penetrating and illuminating critic so long as his analysis depended on what must have been a truly remarkable ear, went astray when he tried to erect his system as a rigid abstract construction.

Theory's claim to be admitted to the humanistic curriculum would seem, then, to be fair enough even if only on the auxiliary grounds outlined above. But what of the possibility previously mentioned of a humanistic approach to the subject itself? Is it possible for the student to derive from his exercise in harmony, counterpoint, and the rest, values analogous to those gained from classics, history, and philosophy?

The easiest answer to this question would point out that most instruction in theory is at the same time instruction in some specific historical style, such as Palestrina counterpoint or Bach chorale-harmonization. The student thus gains an intimate knowledge of the methods of the past at the same time that he is perfecting his own technique. Unfortunately, it is all too often the case that he finds the technique thus learned irrelevant to his own needs, and his knowledge of the past no deeper than a few convenient rules of thumb. What is wrong, I think, is the frequent failure of instruction to distinguish between the general principles of musical thought and its historical-stylistic aspect. For inculcating the general laws of melodic construction and voice-leading, the music of Palestrina is no more and no less useful as a model than that of twenty other composers. It becomes less useful, however, when Palestrina's individual mannerisms are so admired that they seem to have become in some mystical way normative for all succeeding generations. The mannerisms have their value, it is true, but only insofar as they can be made to indicate how all details of a successful artistic style work together toward a unified effect. It is important to distinguish basic laws such as those governing the general shape of a melody, the placing of its climax, and the approach to the cadence, from rules that are relevant only within the restricted context of the Palestrina style, such as the so-called law of melodic gravity, which insists that larger intervals precede smaller when ascending and the reverse

when descending. And while it is correct to justify the prohibition of parallel fifths and octaves so long as independence of voices is a desideratum, it is hard to explain the ban on all melodic sixths save the ascending minor one except by saying, "That is the way Palestrina did it."

A better case can be made for the pedagogical functions of Bach's chorale style, for the problem with which Bach struggled is one which is bound to arise in the experience of every musician: how to achieve, in four-part vocal idiom, the richest tonal harmonization of a simple periodic melody. If it can be demonstrated, as I believe, that in almost all cases Bach arrived at optimum solutions, it follows that the principles governing this specific historical style can, with little essential alteration, be applied as generally valid whenever a similar problem arises. Bach's chordal vocabulary is limited from the point of view of nineteenth-century standards, it is true. There is no *a priori* reason why chords of the augmented sixth should not be used in such settings; and if students are forbidden to use them they should realize that the reasons for the prohibition are historical rather than inherent. But once we accept Bach's basic harmonic lexicon, we find that almost all his stylistic principles can be deduced therefrom. The idiosyncratic element is at a minimum; indeed, I find it hard to adduce a single mannerism analagous to those of Palestrina.

Here, I think, we are at the heart of the matter, for the more one examines the Bach harmonizations the more conscious he becomes of the fact that here he is dealing, not with a style, but with style itself—style not as a congeries of easily catalogued individual characteristics, but as an organic unity to which every detail, no matter how apparently unimportant, contributes. The awareness of style is neither more nor less than the ability to think in music, whether in one's own terms or in the language established by one of the great composers of the past. Here is ground upon which composer and musicologist can meet, for this fundamental sense of style is indispensable to each.

Let me give one obvious example of what I mean by this sense of style. In the late works of Beethoven we find, embedded in an essentially traditional idiom, details of voice-leading that violate all orthodox procedure. In the Quartet, Opus 131, for example, there are parallel fifths that resist every simple attempt at explanation, and in the Piano Sonata, Opus 106, there are flagrant parallel octaves. Such passages can by no means be termed mannered or manneristic:

they call no attention to themselves nor are they repeated for their own sake at every opportunity. They arise only rarely, and only in response to the needs of the situation. But Beethoven, consciously or unconsciously aware of the demands of his musical logic, achieved his unique ends through unique means. By violating a particular style—the traditional one based on classical voice-leading—he gained the essence of style itself: the oneness of technique and expression.

At this point it should be apparent that the real importance of theory, from a humanistic point of view, resides in its direction toward the appreciation of the meaning of style itself, rather than in its narrower historical or practical orientations. I grant that actual instruction all too often ignores this ideal aim. There should not be many subjects—harmony, counterpoint, and the rest—but one, music. The interrelationships between chordal progression and voice-leading, and their ultimate interdependence, must be made clear. Form cannot be divorced from harmony, nor orchestration from form. Indeed, orchestration, rightly taught, could become the crown of the entire system, demonstrating as it then would how the choice of setting must be ultimately dictated by the unified concept of the whole work. Orchestration would be, as it ought, an integral part of the compositional process; and we should be spared the absurdity of exercises that imply that instrumentation is largely a matter of caprice or merely an attempt to achieve the maximum euphony.

Naturally, for pedagogical reasons, the familiar abstractions of strict counterpoint, four-part harmony, and the like, have their part to play; but it must always be remembered that they are only abstractions. This is why it is essential always to refer to the ear, for music as heard, not music as read on the page, should be the constant standard of evaluation. (Of course, I do not mean to exclude music heard mentally; indeed, one of the purposes of ear-training is to develop the ability to auralize.) For the same reason, analysis of living music of all periods is necessary at every stage; for this is the only insurance against the erection of the pedagogical abstractions into artificial norms.

The treatment of instruction in fugue is a good case in point. We all know what happened to it at the hands of the Conservatoire; we have only to read Gédalge's well-known treatise to realize vividly how a living form can all too easily become a bloodless abstraction. The *fugue d'école* no doubt has its uses for one who wishes to study

the sources of Saint-Saën's amazing lack of style, but it has no value for one who wishes to approach actual fugal composition, either critically or creatively. Nor is the solution to be expressed simply in the cry, "Back to Bach!" The serious student of fugue will go back to Bach, of course; but accurate codification and imitation of Bach's procedures alone will lead him no nearer to his goal than faithful obedience to Gédalge or Cherubini. It is easy to learn the mechanical rules for finding the correct tonal answer for a given subject, but these can be downright misleading if we do not understand their rationale. Such statements as "Bach never modulates to keys more than two accidentals away from the tonic," even if strictly correct, would be important only as an aid to the investigation of the true nature of tonal relationships in the fugue.

No. What chiefly distinguishes the masterwork in this form from an academic imitation is the relationship between the subject and its treatment: in the great fugues of Bach the subject itself calls forth and dictates the form as a whole. It may well be that fugue as an independently creative design is now dead, and that Bach's tonal idiom is archaic; but no other body of musical literature so well demonstrates the essential and intimate connection between motif and line, between theme and development. It is through observation of this principle at work that we find the applicability of the study of fugue to other musical forms and hence the best possible justification of the retention of this apparently outmoded discipline.

As I have tried to outline it, the study of fugue exemplifies theory considered as the mastery of musical thought. Conceived of in this way, it precisely meets the first of my demands of a humanistic discipline: that it approach human activities and documents as expressions of thought. What of the second—that it consider these expressions as embodiments of values? What can musical theory have to do with value?

Here again the key is to be found in the concept of style. Style, in any art, is the repository of the values of logical cogency, of coherence, of economy. It is what makes possible unity without uniformity, and diversity without disparity. Its comprehension is the source of power in the creative artist; its appreciation is the source of the critic's taste and discrimination. In Whitehead's phrase, "style is the ultimate morality of mind." [2]

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[2] Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1929; p. 19.

In representational arts the choice of the specific subject-matter, or the way in which it is treated, is indicative of fundamental attitudes on the part of the artist—that is, it embodies value. In music this easy means of communication is either lacking or restricted to relationships between music and text or extra-musical ideas. We have to fall back on style itself to give us whatever clue we can have. Whatever one may mean by the terms "musical expression" and "musical content," he must realize that they can be communicated only through the vehicle of style. But at this point theory stops, and music itself begins.

Professor Cone's article was read at the conference on "Music as Paideia" held on October 12, 1957 by the Hill School, Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

Aaron Copland's "Piano Fantasy"

by Arthur Berger

The grandiose, sprawling forms of Wagner and Mahler inevitably led to the reaction that produced Webern's *Six Bagatelles* for string quartet with a duration of only three and one-half minutes and his set of little 'cello pieces that take but two minutes in all to perform. The reaction was a salutary one, since it eliminated from music some repetition and padding that no longer seemed so important for listeners who were confronted over and over again, as they still are today, with a circumscribed number of traditional pieces. There was repetition enough from one performance of a given work to another. Why compound it further with avoidable repetition within a work itself?

But it was equally inevitable in the pendular swing that some composers should, in turn, react against the extremes of concentration. Elliott Carter's String Quartet comes to mind as a notable example of this trend in the vanguard of American music. Though it is ostensibly cast in three movements, its development from beginning to end is essentially continuous for forty-five minutes. The pauses seem merely a device to afford breathing places for both auditors and players, since each "new" movement resumes the thread exactly where the previous one has left off.

In this preoccupation among several of our composers for covering a large canvas again, it is apparent that the Viennese school has been successful in eliminating excess. Length has become relevant and seems more or less determined by requirements of the material. Or it may be more accurate to say that the material and the devices for working it out are somehow chosen with the idea of length in mind. Thus, in planning his Piano Fantasy, commissioned by Juilliard School of Music in connection with the observances of its fiftieth anniversary, Aaron Copland seems to have been concerned, virtually before anything else, with the problem of filling out a substantial time-span convincingly. In anticipation of its premiere on the following Friday, he wrote as follows in *The New York Times* on Sunday, Oct. 20: "A long and continuous one-movement form has always seemed to me one of the most taxing assignments a composer can undertake."

Now new trends often arise out of aspirations that occur at approximately the same time, but independently, in the minds of different personalities. It is needless to belabor the point, but it may be pertinent to state, if only for the record, that when Carter's Quartet came to the attention of the musical world in 1953, Copland had been thinking about his Fantasy for some time. In my book on our present dean of American composers, published in that year, I observed, "In 1952 Copland's friends became aware that he had some works in progress (among them, an opera and a fantasy for piano, but in his characteristic fashion he has remained noncommital about these incomplete projects."

His opera, *The Tender Land,* occupied almost all of his time up to 1954, when it had its premiere. Meanwhile he may already have had sketches for his Fantasy in his notebooks, for it is not uncommon for a composer while writing one work to come upon ideas better suited to another. Perhaps in 1952 he had simply started to think about an extended, freely organized keyboard work, or had done no more than promise such a piece to the late William Kapell for the repertory of this highly accomplished young pianist, who had recently added Copland's Piano Sonata to his recital programs with enormous success. (To its acknowledgement of the Juilliard commission the title page of the Fantasy adds the gratifying statement, "and dedicated to the memory of William Kapell.")

However this may be, Copland did not put the full quota of his creative energies into the Fantasy until 1955, when the Juilliard

commemoration of 1956 was presented to him as an incentive for its completion. Its difficult problems detained him until early 1957, so that a special concert had to be arranged for its performance the season after the anniversary concerts had been given. In this intense devotion to a solo or chamber work Copland has long commanded our respect, in contrast to so many composers of our time who consider only their orchestral and theatre works—those, namely, for a larger audience—worthy of their maximum effort.

The challenge he had imposed upon himself was more than one of merely filling out a large frame. He also sought "a spontaneous and unpremeditated sequence of 'events' that would carry the listener irresistibly (if possible) from first note to last, while at the same time exemplifying clear if somewhat unconventional structural principles. . . . To be 'fantastic' without losing one's bearings, is venturesome, to say the least. And yet a work of art seems to me the ideal proving ground for just such a venture."

It could be assumed, I suppose, that this was merely one man's approach to the concept of *perpetual variation* that governs so many works written according to 12-tone principles, since the Fantasy draws substantially on these principles without being strictly organized according to them. Yet Copland used serial devices in his Quartet for piano and strings of 1950 and still came up with his customary tightly-knit shapes and clearly defined symmetry. The Quartet is one of his noblest achievements, memorable for its striking sonorities and a scherzo that is surpassed nowhere else, perhaps, in his output. But the three descending notes in whole steps (the "Three Blind Mice") which are derived from the basic tone-set, are almost always present to remind us that we never really get far from home.

The Fantasy, by contrast, is like an adventure. Though each event brings some skillful reference to the basic idea, the listener feels as if he is let loose in a new big city with fresh rewards at every turn of the corner. Once caught up in the adventure he finds it hard to drop out. What will be next? What will be the *dénouement?*

There are just a few familiar landmarks—for example, the sense of a return to the beginning on p. 38 and the ornamented recurrences of the sustained passage on p. 11. And though it involves a departure from orderly approach to the Fantasy from start to finish, it seems a good idea to consider these landmarks first, since they are also landing places that arrest the more active passages.

Piano Fantasy

Aaron Copland

(1955-57)

Commissioned by the Juilliard School of Music,
William Schuman, President,
on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary celebration

and

Dedicated to the memory of

William Kapell

The title page, dedication and score page reproduced in this magazine are taken from the composer's manuscript.

Piano Fantasy

Aaron Copland
(1955-57)

* Metronome markings throughout are to be understood as approximations only.

Carl Fischer Music Co., Inc.
225 West 57th Street
New York 19, N. Y.

The return comes as a consummation of a highly satisfying curve—the path of a projectile that is cut off in mid-flight but somehow manages to resolve itself. It is as if the attempt on p. 37 to get beyond the resources of the piano (beyond the top B-sharp), by being thwarted, leaves no other recourse than a resumption of the chords of the opening page in a relatively normal range.

The return, however, turns out to be a false one. Another surprise is in store for us—the double appoggiatura or *coulé*, a slide on the interval of a 3d, extended later to encompass a 4th:

Example 1

Superficially it calls to mind Prokofieff's Third Piano Concerto. But the treatment is recognizably Copland's and suggests a similar device in the middle movement of his Piano Quartet. Listening closely, one may be intrigued by the rhythmic shifts, since the ornament occurs on the second quarter of the measure, then on the second eighth, then on the fourth eighth, etc.

A more decisive return, with modifications of which I shall speak later, is recognized on p. 42, after which there is more of the double appoggiatura. This leads to another ascent to the top of the keyboard—a brief two-part counterpoint that has a glassy, percussive effect as it accelerates but that culminates, according to the composer's printed instructions in the score, with a "slowing up (trailing off to 'no tone' whatever)." Though the material is different, it seems like a nostalgic reminiscence of the height of the projectile. To solidify the fundamental idea, the disturbances from the high range are dissipated. Thus, after a pause, there is a quiet, "bell-like" restatement of the initial subject in a canon that is the first part of a brief coda.

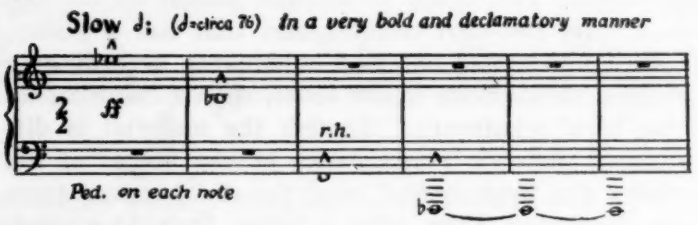
The reiterated harmony introducing the passage on p. 11 (Ex. 2a) is capable of being closely related to the opening of the piece (Ex. 2b). Compare the emphasized D-flat in the bass of the chord with the extended 4th tone at the opening. Notice also that B-flat, F, C, reduced, lie in the same relation as the opening E-flat, B-flat, F, and that the B-flat and F are common to both of these contours built on 4ths. At the same time, the chord of Ex. 2a brings to mind the opening of Copland's Piano Sonata, where we find the same two intervals (D-flat, B-flat, and F, C) each inverted (Ex. 2c).

As we shall see, 4ths and 5ths are prominent in the Fantasy and we may find other interpretations for the chord in Ex. 2a. For now, it suffices to call attention to allusions to this passage: first on p. 30, where it quietly serves in modified form as the last resting place before the dizzy ascent that culminates at the top of the keyboard; then on p. 39 and the bottom of p. 43, where it serves freely as a basis for the appoggiatura idea, illustrated above in Example 1. Observe that the major 6ths descending in whole steps in Ex. 2a reverse their direction in Ex. 1.

Example 2

(a)

(b)



(c)

Since Copland's use of his fundamental tone-set is often motivic, it acts as another easily recognizable unifying factor. The tonal implications of the set help invest it with simple melodic character. But before anything more is said about it let us examine the 12-tone aspect of the Fantasy in more detail. "As I see it," Copland observed in the *Times*, "twelve-tonism is nothing more than an angle of vision. Like fugal treatment, it is a stimulus that enlivens musical thinking . . . it is a method, not a style. . . ." Thus, he has combined "elements able to be associated with twelve-tone method and with music tonally conceived." A set of ten different tones serve him as a framework. The 11th and 12th, E and G-sharp, remain as a cadence figure and he concedes, "a good case could be made for the view that the over-all tonal orientation is that of E major."

Here are the ten tones: E-flat, B-flat, F, D-flat, B, F-sharp, A, G, D, C. If we take B and F-sharp as a focus, common to two tonalities, we find the first six tones easily outlining F-sharp major simply by substituting the enharmonic equivalents for the first four (D-sharp for E-flat, A-sharp for B-flat, etc.). The six tones from B to C fit into G major without notational change. What is the relevance of these tonal communities in terms of E major? F-sharp major is the dominant of the dominant—a good affirmation of E. G major is pertinent in terms of its relative minor, E, which is tonic minor of the E major cadence.

It may be that in proceeding from an F-sharp major segment to E major Copland merely followed the dictates of an ear long predisposed to major triads a whole-step apart, as in this simple excerpt from *Our Town*:

Example 3

As for the alternation of E minor and E major, it is the common mixture of modes that Copland has long shared with other contemporaries (see the D-natural in the second chord in Ex. 2c). In the order he has established among his twelve tones he has also allowed for the chords based on 4ths that are generously used in the Piano Sonata. If the first nine tones are divided into 3-note segments or tri-chords each produces the same harmony: E-flat (1), B-flat (2), F (3); then B (5), F-sharp (6), D-flat (4), and finally, G (8), D (9), A (7). It may also be significant, in providing symmetry, that these chords built on 4ths are transpositions of one another a major 3d apart, describing an augmented triad (E-flat, B, G). For the last segment *is* an augmented triad: C, E, G-sharp. While the relationship is heard, I do not perceive that Copland makes much of the parallel. The last tri-chord is used for contrast, and we shall see how Copland keeps it in reserve for tension at the climax (pp. 29, 34, and 35). It is sufficient for now to recognize that the chords of 4ths on the first page and the later combinations of a major 2nd and perfect 4th (i.e., G, A, D, reading upwards) are ingredients of the set at the same time as they are characteristic of his harmonies before he used serial procedures.

In short, while these procedures have brought fresh and exciting qualities into his music, they do not seem to have altered his essential style substantially. Even Stravinsky, who has preserved his personality to a suprising degree in his recent 12-tone ventures, has been affected more than Copland. The scherzando genre (pp. 15 to 29), with the toccata elements and nervous drive, presents Copland in a thoroughly familiar guise. The forthright initial statement of the ten tones, followed by insistent chords (Ex. 4a), strikes the same prophetic attitude as the opening of the Piano Variations or the Piano Sonata. There is even a brooding passage (Ex. 4b) in the Hebraic vein to which Paul Rosenfeld drew attention in the early 1930s.

Example 4
(a)

(b)

It is meaningful that the first four tones are in relief (Ex. 2b), so that it is not until they are repeated in diminution that the remaining six of the basic 10-tone set are heard. For they immediately occur as a vertical harmony (Ex. 4a). If the whole measure is regarded as a single chord, the tones descending from E-flat to D-flat are heard as the original 4-note segment, while ascending from F to E-flat we find the same segment in inversion. The repeated E on p. 11 is the 4th tone of the segment, transposed to G-flat (Ex. 5a).

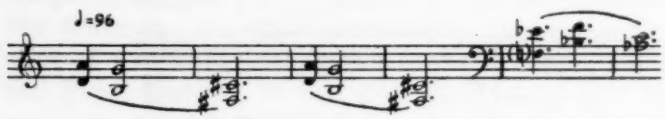
In its second bold statement, the 10-tone set starts on B (at the bottom of the first page), supporting the tonality of E. At the very end, just after the canon, the first six notes (or hexachord) of this transposition return as a quiet counterpoint in the right hand to the original version of the set on E-flat which is played slightly louder in the left hand. Against B, the E-flat suggests the leading-tone of a dominant preparing the final cadence in E.

As a result of Copland's free departures from the series, we constantly discover it in the most innocent guises, as in the 2-part harmony derived from an inversion on A, with the first hexachord repeated before five more tones are added (Ex. 5b). This is preceded by a freer, but still methodical, treatment of nine of these tones. Each 2-note segment or dyad is reversed. Instead of A-D we have D-A, etc. (Ex. 5c).

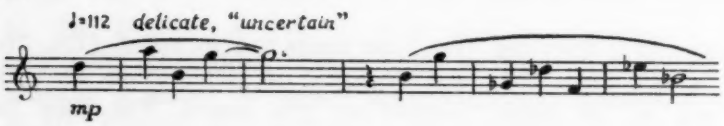
Example 5

(a)

(b)



(c)



Taking a broader view of 12-tone method, we may hear the pedal-point (E, G-sharp) at the bottom of p. 3 as the completion of the opening 10-tone set, even after the free chords and the transposition on B have intervened. Above this pedal-point a lyrical line starts on a conflicting E-flat and B-flat, leading us to expect F as the 3d tone. It soon becomes obvious that E-flat is really the 2d member of a transposition starting on the held G-sharp in the bass. This elision, in which the 12th tone of one group serves double duty as the first tone of the next as well, is characteristic of Webern. It is strict treatment in contrast to the freedom that marks the subsequent extension of Ex. 4b. Elements of the set insinuate themselves into this section, including chords based on hexachords of the prime, retrograde and inversion, until the last brace of p. 7, where the music glides with ease into a deployment of eleven tones from G-sharp and ten tones of an inversion on D. Soon afterwards, the inversion is heard on A-flat in the left hand, growing by accretion—first only five tones are given and these are repeated with an addition of four more, then we start again and reach the 10th, and finally all twelve are traversed.

The ostinato at the bottom of p. 9 (E-flat, C-flat, D-flat) comprises the 2d, 3d and 4th notes of the retrograde (11th, 10th and 9th tones of the prime). Their significance is illuminated on p. 41 where, as D-sharp, B, C-sharp, they lead directly into an 11-tone retrograde. In the gathering momentum as we approach Ex. 2a the set is heard outlined in the left hand, but with only the first hexachord intact. Ex. 2a may be interpreted as starting with the inversion of the first hexachord of a missing A-flat. Thus, we have D-flat (2), G-flat (3), B-flat (4), C (5), F (6). Or perhaps this chord was freely derived from intervals already firmly implanted in Copland's ear. Its basis is not so clear as that of the 2-part harmony in Ex. 5b, which is heard in several transpositions with different elements in the right hand—among them an improvisatory scale pattern that has the character of such early keyboard works as the 16th century Hornpipe of Hugh Aston. It is as if Copland, approaching the piano as an explorer in this adventure, came upon its most primitive resources along with its most sophisticated ones.

The scales descend to a low range where a new chromatic motive with Bartókian percussiveness ushers in the scherzo which keeps skirting the basic set. We hear 5-6-7-8 or 7-8-9-10 or rearrangements like 2-1-3-4-5-6-7, and on p. 16, starting with the last E of the first measure of the lowest brace, all the tones but the 5th, with the 11th turning up out of place after the 7th. At last, on p. 23, there is the original 10 tone set on E-flat. The digression within the scherzando, to be played "with humor," gives us some reversed dyads as in Ex. 5c, as well as a slightly free retrograde on F-sharp: 1-2-3-5-4-7-8-7-9-10-11-12. After a quiet return of the scherzando there is growing intensity with the introduction of chords like those in the "Hebraic" section—more emphasis being given now to the tri-chords, whereas before the full hexachords had been struck simultaneously. We reach a climax with two chords derived from a transposition on E (Ex. 6). In the strictest grouping of the two hexachords G (6) would be in the first chord, but it has been exchanged for D-sharp (9). Above it we find broken augmented triads, if we analyze each hand separately. But the consecutive eighth-notes also form an ascending whole-tone scale, with the intervals stretched to ascending 9ths and descending 7ths.

Example 6

The intention is to place the augmented triads in relief—the last segment of the set, reserved, as I have said, for development at this climactic point. In the ensuing measures, over the same chords in the bass, remarkable sonorities are achieved with descending whole-tone scales in which the right hand traverses all four available augmented triads—a 12-tone aggregate in a new order.

After repose on p. 30 the last tri-chord of the set returns with greater intensity, followed by explosive tremolos, scales and glissandos, and a 10-tone series of 6ths that ascend to the highest B-sharp. After a caesura to allow the clangorous build-up to subside, there is the eloquent return to the opening section. The more conclusive return, somewhat curtailed, has the 10-tone set on C rather than E-flat. But again there is the pedal point on E and G-sharp, with the lyrical melody above it. This time the E-flat is the first note of the set, rather than the second, as it had been on p. 3. The held G-sharp now serves to complete the set as No. 12. At the end of the coda we return to the E and G-sharp, our cadence formula, with the very low E now supported for acoustical reasons by the lowest B. Finally, the bottom key of the piano, A, is added to B, both serving as a percussive adjunct to an octave doubling of the 12th note of the set—the G-sharp without the E.

In Schoenberg's practice such octave duplication was avoided since it drew attention to one note and thus mitigated the independence, the equal importance, of all twelve. Copland is not concerned with such strictures in his free application of 12-tone principles. He uses octave doublings as liberally as he returns to a note before all twelve have been stated, or interpolates tones into the series, or merely bases certain passages in a general way on intervals of the basic subject, or even departs from the set entirely in some sections. The basic 12-tone formation serves him throughout as a device to support rigorous structural coherence much in the

same way that the theme of the Piano Variations served him in 1930. And the greatest single factor that emerges from his accomplishment is not that he has joined the ranks of the 12-tone school, but that he has written a work that is a major contribution to American music and stands on a lofty plane in the company of his Variations, Piano Sonata, Sextet and Piano Quartet.

Finally, if he has employed some of the refinements of 12-tone practice, what he has come up with is a product of rugged Americanism nonetheless—the bold, broad sweep of Whitman, the massive piano-writing of Ives. At the same time though the form of fantasy has been a successful means of releasing him, he has still preserved a certain characteristic economy in the amount of material he has assembled and the thoroughness with which he has exhausted its potentialities. What Theodore Chanler wrote of Copland twenty-five years ago seems even truer today than ever before: "Copland generally shows a flawless ear and sense of proportion. Moreover, his faculty for discovering unexpected resources in his material, for presenting it under different aspects, always alive and essentially musical, shows great imaginative force. . . ." Nothing could serve a composer better in the execution of a large, uninterrupted work, freely organized, than a sense of proportion and a faculty for discovering unexpected resources in his material. And these are among the chief virtues that the Piano Fantasy radiates.

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Dance Notation

by Ann Hutchinson

Comparison with music notation has always proved the best means of explaining what dance notation is. Musicians have always understood the function of dance notation and its relation to the art form, because of their familiarity with music notes. This is taken for granted. It would be unthinkable in this day and age to undertake all that is involved in teaching, studying, rehearsing, and composing music without the aid of written notes and printed scores. And yet at one time music was handed down only by oral tradition. Such primitive methods have long since been discarded, and music notation has evolved into a functional means of recording the elements of music—not perfect, perhaps, in the light of present-day needs in composition, but satisfactory in that through it the art of music has flowered and the recorded masterpieces of the past are enjoyed throughout the world.

Not so in the art of dance. Non-dancers often discover with surprise that dance is still at the stage where music was centuries ago. Dance, in all its forms, is still handed down "by eye." The child

watches the teacher, imitates, and then tries to remember from week to week, without any written version to remind him. The dance teacher, having no library of written dances or teaching materials, has only his memory to draw on. True, there are books *about* dance, and many drawings and photographs, but these do not represent *movement*, the very essence of dance. Choreographers rarely plan ahead in preparation for a new work. A few make isolated notes in words or stick figures, but nothing comparable to a score. The actual composing begins when the rehearsal has started and the choreographer is faced with the dancers. Then, within the few weeks at his disposal, he must pray for the necessary inspiration and flow of ideas. Once composed, the work is subsequently rehearsed from memory. As the seasons go by and dancers are replaced, the work becomes watered down as inevitable changes occur. The revival of a work which has not been performed for a few years is a nightmare. The choreographer or ballet master reaches as many of the former dancers as possible, to glean from them what they remember. The result is often chaotic, with the fur flying as different people with "perfect" memories argue over the exact count, sequence, or position on stage. A comparable situation in the field of music would be ludicrous. Imagine members of the Boston Symphony, say, meeting to try to remember a work composed five years before by Stravinsky, and arguing over what notes should be played and when and by which instrument. Without music notation it is doubtful that the original composition would be remembered for more than a few months by either the composer or the performers. It is not surprising that many first-rate ballets have been lost forever.

This, then, is the general state of affairs in the dance world, a situation in which the gifts of the most talented should be the more lauded because they emerge with such difficulty out of awkward and impractical working conditions. I say "general state of affairs" because in a few areas this situation no longer exists. With the advent of a universally applicable system of dance notation, one which has proved to be functional and practical, the tremendous educational and cultural advantages made possible through the use of such a system are now being felt. Through the instances of its use in the different aspects of dance we see the possibility of a renaissance in this art form.

Before describing Labanotation, as this system is called, I must touch on the matter of dance films. The subject of recording dance invariably elicits the suggestion that obviously motion pictures are the answer—why bother with learning a system of notation, since ballets can surely be reconstructed more easily from films. Here

again, comparison with the field of music offers an analogy. The recorded musical work, in spite of its increasing perfection, has not taken the place of the printed score. Teachers have not discarded the printed book to impart a knowledge of music, and the composer does not rely on tape recorders alone in creating a new work. For dance the perfect record is a combination of notation plus the film. The film will always be one performance of the work by a certain cast, whereas the notation represents the work itself as the choreographer wished to set it down. Resistance toward dance notation exists because previous generations have grown up mastering their profession without using it. The majority of them object to going back to kindergarten to learn to read and write the dance equivalent of "the cat sat on the mat." They are interested only in mastering a simple shorthand which can be learned quickly. This shorthand should, of course, contain all the detail which they feel important, and preferably be applicable to all forms of dance. Here is the paradox. Dance, as a complex art, takes years of study to master, and yet the recording of this art—in the opinion of the average dancer—should be quick and easy. Fortunately there are a few who realize that movement notation must be comprehensive if it is to record faithfully each action that occurs, and that, like a language, the student gets out of it only what he puts into it. A few weeks' study of French will not open to us the wealth of French literature.

I may possibly have given the impression that dance notation is a modern invention. The truth is that countless attempts have been made over the centuries to solve the problem of recording movement. It is believed that the ancient Egyptians used hieroglyphs to record movements, and that the Romans had a method for recording salutatory gestures. The first manuscript known to be dance notation, dating from the end of the fifteenth century, can be found in the municipal archives in Cervera, Spain. Since then many different methods have been tried, some well founded and achieving considerable success during their era, others dying an early (and warranted) death. Nor has the search ceased. As with music notation, each year brings new attempts to solve the problem. It is interesting to note that both in music and in dance these new inventions are often the work of people who have little acquaintance with the intricacies of the art which they wish to record.

The history of dance notation follows closely the development of the art of dance, and provides an interesting array of the different

methods used, as well as of the different people who have devoted themselves to the subject. The first to publish a book in which simple dances were recorded was Thoinot Arbeau, a priest who had to use an assumed name to hide his identity. His book, *Orchésographie,* which appeared in France in 1588, used abbreviations for the names of the steps. These were few and well known, so it was sufficient to use R for *révérence,* b for *branle,* and so. Such word abbreviations are still used today in fields such as ballet where established terminology exists. But they presuppose much knowledge on the part of the reader, and this has been the disadvantage of all systems based on one style of dance.

The first real system of dance notation arose out of the development of dance as a court activity during the time of Louis XIV. The importance of the path of the dancer as well as the details of footwork used were stressed in the system of Raoul Feuillet, which belongs in the category of track drawings. First published in 1699 and subsequently translated into English, this system spread across the Continent to the extent that ladies had copies of the notated dances on their bedside tables. For the movements which it recorded, the system was excellent and has won the admiration of all students of dance notation. However, the introduction of more complex use of the arms and body created difficulties in that Feuillet's method did not allow for expansion, and, becoming too cumbersome, it eventually fell into disuse.

The very popular stick-figure idea was the next device tried. Here skeletal figures indicate the various positions of the dancer, the drawings being more or less stylized. In *Sténochorégraphie,* published in Paris in 1852, Arthur Saint-Léon, the leading dancer of his time, drew the legs as seen by the audience and the arms as seen from above. A similar system put out in 1887 by Albert Zorn, ballet master in Odessa, had widespread acceptance, but little material in it now exists. The stick-figure systems have the advantage of giving an immediate impression of the desired position, but certain disadvantages, of which the greatest is in showing continuity of movement. Because these systems had to add music notes to indicate timing, it was inevitable that systems based on the music note would arise. The first of these was by Vladimir Stepanov, a dancer at the Imperial Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, whose book, *L'Alphabet des Mouvements du Corps Humain,* appeared in Paris in 1892. Had he not died so young, the system might have been further developed.

As it was, this ballet-based system proved valuable for the recording of ballets in the repertoire. Through these notations the régisseur, Nicolas Sergeyeff, was able years later to reconstruct full-length ballets for the Sadlers Wells and International Ballet companies. There is no doubt that the notes only served as a reminder, in view of the fact that his reconstructions of the same work varied considerably, not to mention the story told of his failure to notice when the pages of his book had been turned back by a prankster during the reconstruction sessions.

One of the most widely talked of systems is that of Vaslav Nijinsky. For years rumors have been heard of this system, but it was not until the great dancer's widow, Romola Nijinsky, contacted the Dance Notation Bureau that some concrete facts were learned. Mme. Nijinsky and her associate Mme. Légat had been translating the manuscripts, hoping to organize the material into publishable form. The difficulty lay in the fact that Nijinsky left behind three versions of the system, and, having no experience at all in the use of a system of dance notation, Mme. Légat was at a loss to know how to sort out the material. In agreeing to help Mme. Légat I embarked on a most interesting adventure in detection, one which is not yet over. The existence of manuscripts written by Nijinsky such as *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* provide the incentive to decode his system so that they can be translated and his original version of the ballets made available to the public for performance and study. It is safe to say, on the basis of work so far on this material, that the system itself has nothing new of importance to offer.

Starting with Rudolf Laban, who began work on his system of notation over fifty years ago, a new approach to movement was made. Laban, a genius who delved into movements in all forms, based his system on fundamental laws, writing it as it is experienced by the performer rather than as seen by the spectator. The Laban system describes any action in terms of the combination of elements used: the part (or parts) of the body moving into a given direction at a stated speed and with a stated amount of energy. Because of this "spelling out" of action, it is universally applicable to all fields where movement must be recorded and studied, such as theatre, sports, industry, and physical therapy, as well as dance. First published in 1928, Kinetography Laban, or Labanotation as it is known in the United States, has had the advantage of being used by countless people in different fields. Thus contributions

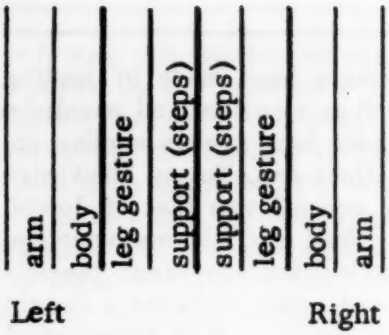
toward its high state of development have been made by leading dancers, choreographers, teachers, as well as musicians and scientists.

Other systems in the past few decades have used a similar approach but different means to achieve their end. To my knowledge the first purely scientific system to be evolved was that of Joseph Schillinger, well known in the music field for his mathematical approach to composition. Schillinger calculated the range possible in all the joints of the body and described action as being a certain number of degrees in a plus or minus direction. This information was then plotted on a graph. A more recent system of a similar nature is that of Noa Eshkol of Israel, whose chief interest lies not in recording existing dance forms or providing a system of notation which will serve the dance field as it is now, but a means through which new developments in dance composition will be possible. This embraces using major and minor keys in movement, and intervals, in composing movement, comparable to intervals in music. Such ideas have been discussed loosely by advanced thinkers but are still far ahead of our time.

Admirable as such systems may be from the point of view of pure logic, they are too far removed from the performer's understanding of movement to gain acceptance in the dance field today. For this reason the Laban system has striven to achieve a blend of the practical and the scientific. Movement is described in terms that are commonplace—"arm extends forward with the palm up," "leg steps back low on the ball of the foot."—while at the same time a scientific basis provides absolute logic for every rule and analysis. The success of this approach is demonstrated by its acceptance for detailed recording of movement in industry, and its equally successful use in children's dance classes, where it provides a simple description of the basic steps they are learning.

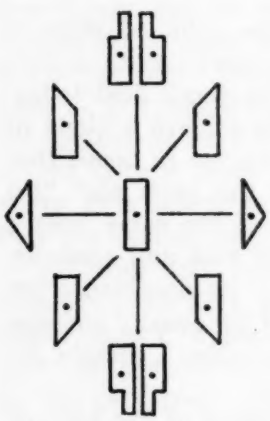
In Labanotation, movement is described in terms of the part of the body moving into a certain direction and level at a given speed. The body is represented by the three-line staff which is read vertically so that the reader's right and left sides are correctly placed and so that continuous movement (the staff is read from the bottom up) can be shown.

THE STAFF



The center line represents the center line through the body dividing right and left. The movement symbols are placed within the appropriate columns.

DIRECTION



The shape of the movement symbol indicates the direction.

The rectangle in the center, which means "in place," is the basic symbol from which the others are derived.

LEVEL

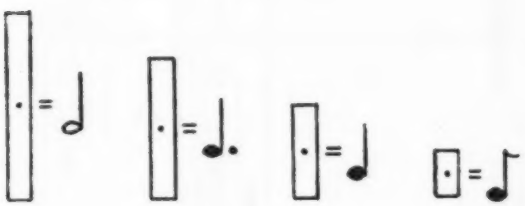
High Middle Low

The three levels, high, middle (horizontal) and low, are distinguished by different shading of the symbol.

Combining the different directions with the different levels.

forward high — right side low — left back diagonal middle — left side high — back low

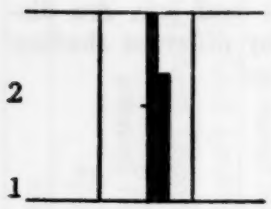
TIMING is shown by the relative length of the symbol.



Long indicates slow; short indiates fast. The center line of the staff is marked off in beats and the measures are divided by horizontal bar lines.

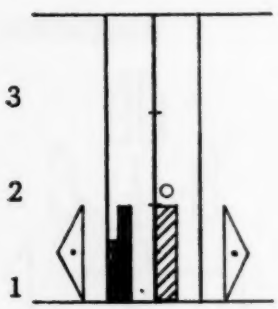
Thus one symbol denotes: by its placement on the staff, the part of the body that moves; by its shape, the direction of the movement; by its shading, the level; and by its length, the timing of the movement—an economy that no other system has achieved.

The symbol below describes the following action:

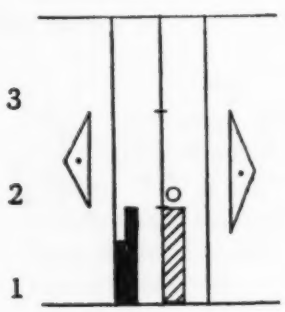


Step forward on the right leg in low level (bent knee) taking two counts to complete the transference of weight.

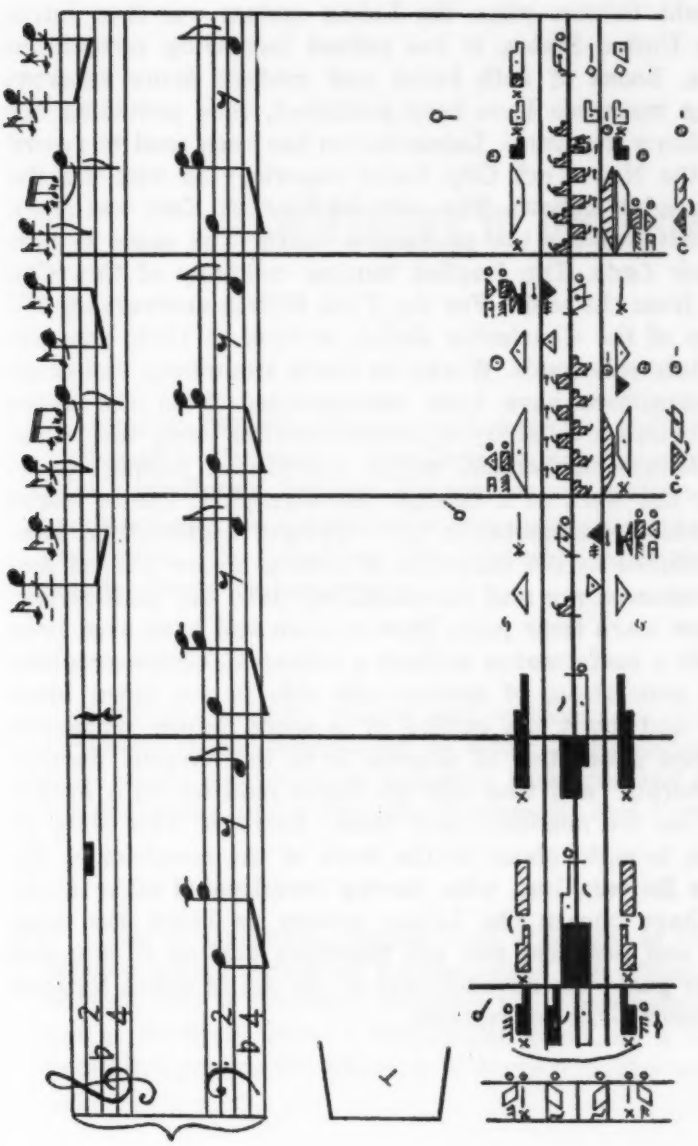
Simultaneous actions are drawn side by side, sequential actions are drawn one after the other.



Simultaneous actions.



Here the arm movements start after the leg actions, the right arm moving a fraction ahead of the left. All such subtle variations are easily shown.



BLUEBIRD

and

PRINCESS

FLORISSE

Girl's Solo

Variation.

Act III

THE

SLEEPING

BEAUTY.

Music

by

TSCHAIKOVSKY

Since the mid-'thirties when the Laban system was first introduced into the United States, it has gained increasing recognition and acceptance. Books of both ballet and modern dance excerpts and of teaching materials have been published, thus providing the beginnings of dance literature. Labanotation has been used to record the ballets in the New York City Ballet repertory as well the the dances from Broadway shows. The score of *Kiss Me Kate* was flown to London to be used for the production there. The same is now true of *My Fair Lady*. The English touring company of *Can Can* was rehearsed from the score. For the Ford fiftieth anniversary TV show, the score of the *Charleston Ballet*, written in 1946, was put to use to facilitate rehearsals. Works by Doris Humphrey and other modern choreographers have been reconstructed from the dance scores for performance or study, a recent instance being the reconstruction of *Shakers* in London, which provided a unique opportunity to study the work of a foreign choreographer. Dance works are now accepted in Labanotation for copyright registration. Labanotation is included in the curricula of several dance schools and colleges. The instances are still comparatively few, but multiplying. Dancers can now learn their parts from a score and have even been known to go into a performance without a rehearsal. Choreographers —the younger generation, of course—are able to jot down ideas ahead of time and draft the outline of a score before rehearsals begin. And a new generation of dancers is in the making, dancers who will be "literate" and who will use dance notation as a matter of course, just as the musician uses music notation. This state of affairs has been brought about by the work of the members of the Dance Notation Bureau, Inc., who, having investigated other available systems, have chosen the Laban system as being the most comprehensive and practical and are therefore putting it into full use so that their goal—the advancement of the art of dance through the use of notation—can be realized.

Contributors to this Issue

ARTHUR BERGER, composer and chairman of the music department of Brandeis University, was formerly associate music critic of the New York *Herald Tribune.* His articles and reviews have been widely published and his compositions have been played by major American orchestras. His *Polyphony for Orchestra,* a Louisville commission, had its premiere last season.

EDWARD T. CONE, pianist and composer, is at present Associate Professor in the department of music at Princeton University. His most recent compositions include a *Nocturne and Rondo* for orchestra and piano, and a *Prelude, Passacaglia and Fugue* for piano solo.

ANN HUTCHINSON, founder and president of the Dance Notation Bureau, is the author of *Labanotation,* the official text book on the subject. She is currently notating the Stravinsky-Balanchine *Agon,* and is working, under a Rockefeller grant, on a series of children's books integrating the teaching of dance with the teaching of notation.

The Spring issue of *The Juilliard Review* will contain articles on a variety of subjects by Peggy Glanville-Hicks (Music of the East and West), Robert Ward (The Implications of Electronic Techniques in Composition), Jan Holcman (Ornamentation in the Music of Chopin) and Lukas Foss (An Experiment in Creative Teaching).

Announcements

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Associated Music Publishers, Inc.

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HENRY COWELL

SYMPHONY NO. 11
(Seven Rituals of Music) . . . . . Study score 3.50

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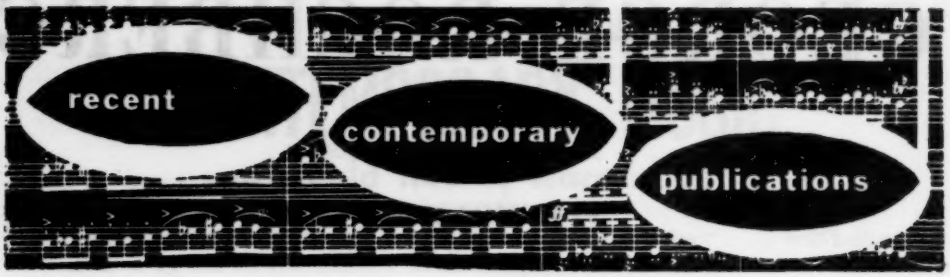

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